

SHE PROMISED TO BE A "PERFECT LADY" FOR FOUR YEARS FOR A THOUSAND DOLLARS



And pretty Mary Geiser, private secretary to L. H. Kleckner, a wealthy real estate broker, signed an iron clad contract to that effect, with the additional clause that she would remain single for forty-eight months.

But Dan Cupid took a hand in the game and produced an attractive young man who persuaded her to go on a straw-ride.

A wedding followed shortly, and Mr. Kleckner sadly inserted an advertisement for a new stenographer. After which he entered the marital state himself and thought the incident was closed.

But now the fair secretary says the money must be paid anyhow, and threatens to produce incriminating letters written by Mr. Kleckner, if he does not keep his half of the contract that she broke.

IT OFTEN happens that a man does not know a good thing when he sees it, but Levi H. Kleckner, a real estate broker of Allentown, Pa., did, and he was willing to pay a premium to get it.

So when a good-looking girl, smartly tailored and business from the top of her jaunty hat to the tips of her well-fitted shoes, applied at his office for the position of private secretary, Mr. Kleckner said, "You'll do little girl, you'll do," and the position was hers.

And she did do. In fact, she did so well that her employer was concerned when he found other business men admiring his trim secretary and congratulating him upon the way she handled his business affairs.

Mr. Kleckner evidently thought "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and one day he surprised the young woman by saying:

"Miss Geiser, you understand my business so well and are of such value to me, that I am going to do a rather unusual thing by you. I want you to sign a four-year contract for me. Will you do it?"

Miss Geiser lifted her delicate eyebrows and replied: "Certainly, I will sign the contract, but I do not see anything unusual about it."

"You Must Go to Church."

"The contract is unusual in this respect. You must promise to remain single for the four years, to be moderate in your dancing, to inform me in advance a contemplated trip to any place of amusement, and to be sure to return to your home every night by 10:30 o'clock. Also, to attend church and Sunday school regularly, tell no falsehoods, treat all my customers with the uttermost respect, and, in fact, act as a true lady for the space of four years. Will you do that?"

But the private secretary was already straightening her papers and covering her typewriter with an immediate exit in mind.

Mr. Kleckner looked worried and saw that he had gone too far. Then a bright idea struck him.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Miss Geiser," he added; "if you'll sign such an agreement I will make a note due in four years, for the sum of \$1,000, and at the expiration of that time, if you have faithfully kept to the contract, the \$1,000 is yours."

Miss Geiser hesitated for a minute and these are some of the things that she evidently turned over in her mind:

"Well, I am not in love with anyone, so I do not want to marry. My mother requires me to be in bed by 11 o'clock every night, and I am not overfond of dancing. I always go to church and Sunday school, anyhow. And me tell a falsehood? I guess not. Mr. Kleckner knows that I have always treated his business callers with consideration, and I know I am a lady. Why not sign and get the \$1,000 in the bargain? I'll do it."

A Remarkable Contract.

So when Mr. Kleckner presented her with the following agreement on August 20, 1904, she gladly affixed her name to it:

"The said Mary A. Geiser is to remain my stenographer until August 18, 1908; should she marry before that time or leave my service for any reasons of her own the said note shall be declared null and void and of no effect whatever."

"Should the said Mary A. Geiser become careless in her conduct and not keep her character beyond reproach, so that I should be compelled to discharge her or ask her to resign on account of her immoral conduct, then the said note

is to be declared null and void and of no effect.

"Should the said Mary A. Geiser visit any dancing resorts out of town or frequent those in town oftener than once or twice a month, unless I grant her leave to do so, then the said note is to be null and void and of no effect."

She was called upon to sign a more binding set of rules which certified that:

"A True Lady."

"I, the undersigned, Mary A. Geiser, do hereby concur in the above restrictions, and further do testify, in order to show my appreciation of past treatment, and that I may be deserving of the aforesaid note, I am willing, provided the said L. H. Kleckner continues his past treatment, to take the best of care of my conduct at all places, so that every one has to look upon me as a true lady only."

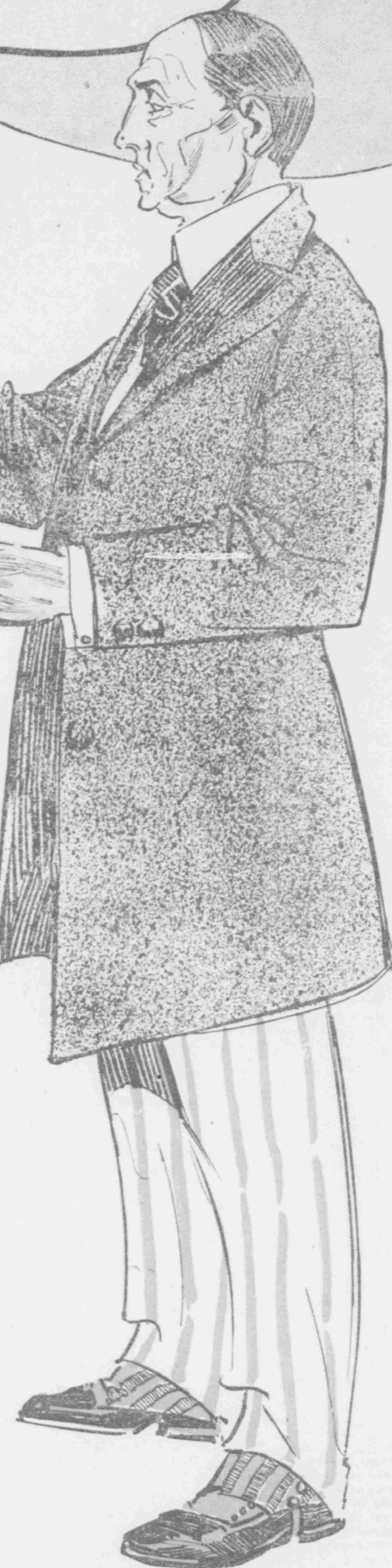
"I also promise to be moderate in my dancing for the sake of my own health, as well as for the sake of my character and good name, and I am willing to try that I may be at home at all times at 10:30 p. m. Should it happen to get later, am willing to report the same and give my reason, and whenever I intend to go to any dancing school or any other dancing resort I am willing to inform the said L. H. Kleckner that it is my intention to do so."

"I also promise to attend my church and Sunday school as regular as possible, and that I will tell no falsehood under any circumstances. If I am guilty of anything I shall under all circumstances confess the truth."

"I will also endeavor to be gentle and polite to all customers and conduct the business as if it were for my own interest, and at no time will allow any of the customers to jolly me. I shall talk strictly business only, having for my motto: 'A place and a time for all things.'"

Met Her Waterloo.

These restrictions were printed on the back of the \$1,000 note, and the reverse side read in this wise:



"Allentown, Pa., Aug. 20, 1904."

"\$1,000."

"Four years after date I promise to pay to the order of Mary A. Geiser, my stenographer, one thousand dollars, according to restrictions and conditions on the back hereof, for value received through services rendered and to be rendered."

(Signed)

"L. H. KLECKNER."

(Witness)

"Thos. O. Kunkinger."

But one day late in the fall of 1904 Miss Geiser looked up from the notes she was transcribing and met her Waterloo. From this very minute any notes, contracts, verbal conditions, or iron-bound restrictions which she may have taken oath to were dead, null, and void.

Dan Cupid, cunning old fellow, caused all the trouble.

The young man who had made the private secretary forget her pot-hooks and attested oaths, transacted the business he had come for, and then saw to a little business of his own.

Went on a Straw Ride.

That night she went on a straw-ride with her new friend and was late for work the next morning.

Miss Geiser, still scornful to tell an untruth, was obliged to go into minute explanations to her employer and was sharply reprimanded, and warned not to let anything of the kind happen again.

The next time she was late to

work she had a better excuse. She was married and her name was now Mrs. Van Buren Reber, she explained proudly. And with that explanation she forfeited the position of private secretary to Levi H. Kleckner to become housekeeper for Van Buren Reber, benedict.

Mr. Kleckner got a new secretary and nothing of importance happened until last February, when Mr. Kleckner married and went on a tour of Europe for a honeymoon trip. Recently he returned and found that Miss Geiser's mother had had the note for \$1,000 recorded against him.

He was amazed and says that he will not pay it, as Miss Geiser, now Mrs. Reber, undoubtedly broke her contract.

Mrs. Reber, once Miss Geiser, says that if the money is not paid she will reveal the contents of a number of letters written to her by her employer, and not on business, either. She promises that these letters will make rare reading and will shock the entire city.

Mr. Kleckner has made application in the county court to have judgment on the \$1,000 note annulled.

But Mrs. Mary Geiser Reber sits awaiting calmly the moment when a certain package of letters now in her possession are brought into court.

She feels pretty sure that she will get the money.

THE CASE OF DICKSON'S DIAMONDS—Second Story in "Below the Deadline" Series—By Scott Campbell

(Continued from Second Page.)

They had emerged from a narrow strip of woods, and in the near distance the dark outlines of a commodious wooden dwelling, with a stable somewhat removed, were discernible against the starry sky. The isolated place was shrouded in gloom, and the solitude and silence were broken only by crickets and insects in the long grass, or the occasional cry of some night bird overhead.

Followed by Coleman, Boyd started a hedge until he arrived at a point back of the stable, to the rear wall of which he cautiously stole and listened. It was as silent as a tomb within, and Boyd next forced open the sliding wooden shutter of a square window, used only for removing refuse.

This gave them easy access to the interior, and Boyd, with a whispered word of caution, led the way in, and closed the shutter. This left them in Egyptian darkness, but Boyd quickly produced an electric pocket lantern, with which he shed a single beam of light across the floor.

"We are here first, Jimmie, and possibly last," he softly remarked. "I don't look for others before the next train comes out, yet we'd best be quiet and cautious. Come this way for a

moment, however. There is a contrivance here which I wish to show you. I never saw anything just like it."

"Evidently you've been here before," muttered Coleman, not a little puzzled. "Only once," replied Boyd. "That was yesterday. Here's the thing I spoke of."

It appeared to be only a barrel placed upright on a mound of loose hay, directly under the edge of the overhanging roof just above. Boyd quietly removed the perforated head, howly ever, and flashed a beam of light into the barrel, revealing several startling facts.

There was no lower head in the barrel, which stood squarely on the loose hay, and paper at the bottom, was a partly burned paraffin candle.

"Good God!" muttered Coleman. "What's the meaning of this? Is it a contrivance for firing the barn?" "Precisely," whispered Felix Boyd. "Clever, isn't it? Had the candle burned low enough to ignite the hay and loose papers, the whole place would speedily have been in a blaze, entirely destroying the incriminating evidence. Note the craftiness of it."

The barrel hoods the light, precluding observation from outside, and prevents a draught from extinguishing the candle. Very long candles of this kind can easily be obtained, long enough to burn for twelve hours. How easy for an incendiary to fire a stable in this way, and deny having been near it for a day at least."

"Infernal clever!" muttered Coleman. "The candle is about half burned out. Who can have extinguished it?"

"I did," laughed Boyd. "I happened out here yesterday morning, and found it burning. I have an idea that the would-be incendiary will show up later, to learn why his scheme failed, and to plant a second candle."

"Good heavens, Boyd, whom do you suspect of this?" "Dickson fears that he has secret enemies, and it may be their work," said Boyd, dryly. "Possibly we shall learn. Have a look at this loose page, Jimmie. What do you make of it?"

"By all the gods, Boyd, it is a leaf from a dictionary!" "The dictionary from which Dickson's patchwork letter was made," chuckled Boyd. "Quiet, dear fellow! There's no knowing when visitors may arrive. I'll replace this head, and it will be assumed that the candle accidentally expired, possibly being

averse to such infamous knavery as arson. That's as we found it. Now to cover, Jimmie, for a long and silent wait."

In the intense gloom of the stable they patiently waited, minute after minute, never speaking, oftentimes scarce breathing, until nearly two hours had passed.

Then their tireless vigil was rewarded, and the supreme cleverness of Mr. Felix Boyd clearly demonstrated. A side door of the stable was quietly opened, and a man bearing a dark lantern cautiously entered.

He listened for several moments, then approached the barrel and examined it. Then he removed the partly burned candle, and got another, fully twenty-four inches long, from a stall near by.

This he adjusted in the barrel, as before, then struck a match and lighted it. As he did so, bending above the open barrel, the two watchers saw that he was a stout fellow, with red hair and beard. Having lighted the candle, he replaced the perforated barrel head, and stole out of the stable by the way he had entered.

Boyd laid a warning hand on Coleman's arm, checking him until the incendiary had closed and locked the door. Then he murmured, softly: "This way, Jimmie! This way. Carefully—not a sound!"

Moving quickly, yet with the utmost caution, they opened the rear window and reached the ground outside. Then Boyd led the way around the stable, hugging the side wall, and gazed toward Dickson's house. The incendiary, barely discernible in the darkness, was then emerging from a shed near the dwelling, around the corner of which he quickly disappeared.

"After him, Jimmie!" whispered Boyd. "Quietly!"

Both started across the open grounds, but had covered hardly a rod when the night air was rent with such a wild shriek for help that their blood fairly curdled. Then came a pistol shot, instantly followed by another and another.

A muttered oath broke from Boyd, and his face grew hard as flint.

"By God, the game is off!" he fiercely cried, rushing toward the corner of the house, around which the bearded man had disappeared. "This way, Jimmie! Use your gun! Drop any man you lay eyes on!"

His voice rang like a trumpet on the night, and was echoed by startling cries from beyond the dwelling. As Boyd turned the corner of it, three men were fairly flying across the

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